

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 /087 W  
-----037328 270753Z /21

R 261720Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1466  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0195

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MOPS BC RH  
SUBJ: RHODESIAN-BOTSWANA BORDER INCIDENTS TAPERING OFF

1. AS FAR AS EMBASSY KNOWS, LAST NOTEWORTHY FIRING INCIDENT  
ALONG RHODESIAN-BOTSWANA BORDER TOOK PLACE NOV 5, 1977  
(GABORONE 2767). DURING JAN 24 DISCUSSIONS ON BOTSWANA DEFENSE  
FORCE WITH GOB CABINET SECRETARY STEENKAMP (SEPTTEL), EMBOFF  
NOTED THAT RHODESIAN-BOTSWANA BORDER HOSTILITIES, ALMOST  
COMMONPLACE IN 1977, SEEM TO HAVE TAPERED OFF.

2. STEENKAMP AGREED WITH THIS ASSESSMENT ALTHOUGH NOTED THAT  
A MINOR SKIRMISH NOT WORTH MENTIONING HAD TAKEN PLACE WITHIN  
THE PAST WEEK AT KASANE. HE ATTRIBUTED LAPSE IN HOSTILITIES  
TO THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS:

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A. PRESSURES FOR RESTRAINT PUT ON IAN SMITH BY SOUTH AFRICA.

B. DESIRE OF ZAMBIANS TO MAINTAIN QUIET SO AS NOT TO DISTURB  
FLOW OF BADLY NEEDED SOUTH AFRICAN IMPORTS WHICH PASS THROUGH  
FRANCISTOWN AND OVER THE TENUOUS FERRY CONNECTION AT THE  
QUADRAPPOINT, SCENE OF MANY PAST FIRING INCIDENTS. STEENKAMP  
SAID THAT FRANCISTOWN CURRENTLY FILLED WITH BACKLOG OF SHIPMENTS

(E.G., SEEDS, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS FOR MINING MACHINERY) WHICH ZAMBIA IS ANXIOUS TO GET MOVING NORTHWARD.

C. DELIBERATE SLOWDOWN OF AZPU RECRUITMENT AS WELL AS HALT OF EXFILTRATION OF WOMEN AND SCHOOL CHILDREN, OWING TO SEVERE OVERCROWDING IN ZAMBIAN MILITARY AND REFUGEE CAMPS. RECALLING EVENTS OF 1977, STEENKAMP SPECULATED THAT THE DAYS ARE OVER WHEN GUERRILLAS BRING WHOLE STUDENT BODIES TO BOTSWANA FROM RHODESIA. THE OVERCROWDING OF NON-COMBATTENT REFUGEES IN ZAMBIAN CAMPS IS OF PARTICULAR EMBARRASSMENT TO ZAPU. NOTE: STEENKAMP SEEMS TO MEAN THAT THE SLOWDOWN IN BORDER-CROSSING ACTIVITY INTO BOTSWANA GIVES THE RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES LESS REASON FOR HOT PURSUIT AND INTENSIFIED BORDER PATROLLING, HENCE FEWER INCIDENTS.

3. AT END OF CONVERSATION, STEENKAMP GAVE HIS VIEW THAT OF THE TWO PATRIOTIC FRONT ARMIES, THAT SUPPORTING ZANU WAS MORE IN THE HABIT OF COMMITTING ATROCITIES AND BEHAVING ALMOST AS BADLY AS THE SMITH SECURITY FORCES. THE ZAPU MILITARY ARM, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS WELL DISCIPLINED AND TRIED TO DEVELOP GENUINE SUPPORT AMONG THE PEOPLE.

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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